

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR MOHAMMED KHAN

Date: 4th October 2018

Your Call

Recently, I wrote to all members to update on the clean-up element of Your Call. In the letter, I set out the help available to councillors to help them to continue to support residents who want to make the borough cleaner and greener.

I've been very impressed with the work going on in wards, with more and more red bags of litter collected by people being seen across the borough, much of it ably supported by ward councillors, who should be at the heart of the efforts. Over the years we've all built up a wealth of knowledge and expertise in organising and promoting local clean ups with the support of neighbourhood staff that is helping to clean up the borough.

There are 366 registered litter pickers in BwD who are supported through the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership portal. We have also encouraged a number of local groups and schools to continue their Your Call clean ups on a regular basis. There are also some excellent groups such as Keep Blackburn Tidy and Keep Darwen Tidy, both have a very active social media presence and have hundreds of followers. I hope their success and the number of red bags being collected will inspire others to take part or at the very least make people think twice about dropping litter in the first place.

It's great to see the community spirit in the borough and hundreds of people every day are doing amazing things that make a difference. This is very rightly attracting interest from other parts of the country.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their efforts and continued support.

Social integration

The Council has led the submission of a bid on behalf of the Borough to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for 29th August 2018. To support the proposal development stage, a series of consultation events with partners were held and included the set-up of a new shadow integration partnership board.

On 19th September 2018 proposals are to be presented to the Ministerial Sub Committee, with a decision later in the year. This will be an iterative feedback process and we want to ensure we have enough information and feedback to be able to organise further stakeholder briefings.

In addition to the national programme, there have been a number of local events over the summer which have helped bring people together. For example, Blackburn Open Walls returned for its third year with 12 artists creating street art masterpieces, Ewood Park hosted the first of its kind #OneRovers festival which celebrated fashion, music, fun and football, Darwen Market hosted Darwen's Got Talent, the 19th annual Blackburn with Darwen Football festival attracted more than 3,000 people, Heritage Open Days were held across the Borough during September and Baroness Massey of Darwen spoke at an event on her story "Darwen to the House of Lords and other journeys".

Sport England Local Delivery pilot

As members will be aware Blackburn with Darwen Council, on behalf of Pennine Lancashire, successfully bid for funding from Sports England to identify new ways of transforming sport and activity and make it easier for people to move from doing nothing to doing something. Working closely with Sport England the programme is progressing with the recruitment of a small core team to support the initial insight and engagement phase of the programme.

Programme activity over the next 3 months will include:

- A Pennine Local Delivery Pilot launch event to include physical activity providers
- Confirmation of the Pennine evaluation framework

- Securing links to wider Government funding initiative e.g. Pennine's Active Travel & BwD's Integration pilot to ensure they complement and add value to the Pennine Local Delivery pilot both strategically and operationally

This is an important programme which will help residents in BwD as well as Pennine Lancashire.

Local Government Association (LGA) – Corporate Peer Challenge

As reported at the last Council Forum, the LGA will be undertaking a Corporate Peer Challenge of the Council week commencing 3rd December. The Peer Challenge Team have the skills and expertise to conduct a thorough challenge of five key themes examining the Council's leadership, financial planning, governance, capacity, understanding of place. We have also asked the Team to challenge two additional areas for the Council – community engagement and digital transformation.

Meetings and discussion sessions are being arranged with a range of officers, members and other stakeholders to enable the Peer team to explore the issues relevant to the challenge.

I hope to provide verbal feedback of their initial findings at Policy Council on 6th December with a final report expected from the Peer team in early January.

Government Consultation on shale gas exploration

The Government have launched two consultations related to shale gas exploration. The consultation outlines proposals related to planning matters and suggest that permission for non-hydraulic fracturing shale gas exploration become Permitted Developments, a system currently used for small house extensions, installation of garden sheds; and that shale gas production projects be added to the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects where the decision is made directly by the relevant Secretary of State.

These proposals have the potential to remove or limit the role of the local authority planning process for shale gas extraction, and whilst at this stage there are no active projects of this type in the borough, I'm concerned that these proposals from the Government could set a precedent for driving future changes to planning decisions and limiting the role of local decision making. The Council will be responding to the consultation and outlining our concerns.

Health and Care integration

Following the successful launch of the Local Integrated Care Partnership, the East, North, West & Darwen Primary Care Neighbourhood Groups have been established and held their first set of monthly meetings.

The purpose of the Primary Care Neighbourhood Groups is to design and transform community health and well-being services to provide an increased range of high quality services to local people who live and work within the four neighbourhoods of Blackburn with Darwen. Representation on each of the neighbourhood groups includes a Primary Care Neighbourhood GP lead, a Children's Services and Adult Services Elected Member, a Practice Manager lead, a Practice Nurse lead, senior managers from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Blackburn with Darwen Clinical Commissioning Group and Lancashire Care Foundation Trust and members from the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector.

To date, there has been good attendance and a wide range of representation around the table, a set of themes / priorities have also started to be identified for each neighbourhood.

Polling District review

Following the Boundary Review in 2017 which changed the number of wards to 17, the draft proposals for the polling districts/polling places have been prepared. The proposals were presented at the Members Strategic Development Session on 17th September and Members were invited to provide any pre-consultation feedback. The formal notice for the review has been published on 1st October 2018 together with the Returning Officer's representations for public consultation.

The consultation invites the public and interested groups to put forward by 9th November 2018, their comments on the proposals or suggests alternatives. The final proposals will be reported to Policy Council for approval on 6th December 2018 for implementation in May 2019. Any changes to the electoral register arising from the review will be made on the 1st February 2019 updated register.

LSP Annual summit

On Monday 8th October the Council will be hosting the first Local Strategic partnership Annual Summit. The change of format to an annual summit is part of our work as an organisation to streamline groups and partnerships to ensure they remain relevant and effective. It will be an opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved with our partners but also to look forward to the future and focus our energies in making things even better for our residents.